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SELECTIONS FROM REPORTS OF CORRESPONDENTS.

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PROPERTIES OF ERYTHRINA.

Dr. Altamirano studied the properties of an alkaloid extracted from the seeds of the coralin (*Erythrina coralloides*), and comes to the following conclusions:—

1. The substance called by him "erythrina" is poisonous for all vertebrates; it acts on the motor nerves like curare.
2. Administered in subcutaneous injections, it kills quickly.
3. Taken by the mouth it acts only in large quantities.
4. Injected into the rectum it seems to be inoffensive.

Erythrina crystallizes in fine, colorless needles.—*Gaceta Médica*, City of Mexico.

UNUSUAL EFFECTS OF CHLOROFORM.

Dr. M. Soriano refers to the case of a young girl who was put under the influence of chloroform in order to have a needle extracted from her hand. No period of excitement was observed, though the girl vomited. During the operation slowness and depression of the pulse and weak and irregular breathing was observed. Different things were tried to bring the patient back to consciousness, but without effect. Suddenly she opened her eyes widely, staring at one point like a cataleptic; her arms were placed in certain positions and remained so for a few minutes; the body became quite rigid; the girl would neither speak nor move, but she was conscious; she opened and shut her eyes when ordered to do so. This cataleptic condition lasted a quarter of an hour.

Dr. Ramos referred to a similar case of a girl who, for severe pain, was kept under chloroform a whole night, in whom anæsthetic sleep alternated with lethargy, somnambulism, and catalepsy. The pulse was slow and weak, but the function of the heart was not altered.

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marked, bronchial breathing, increased vocal fremitus, and in the centre of the dulness distinct bronchophony can all be discovered. No friction sound can be distinguished in the area of dulness. If the patient bend forward, after a few minutes, the above-mentioned percussion sounds will have changed considerably. The dulness does not reach up to the angle of the scapula, but at the area of the former dulness, about three fingers' breadth below the scapula, there is full resonance. At the point of the former absolute dulness the percussion sound is tympanitic, and the bronchial breathing has wholly or partially disappeared. The same changes in percussion and auscultation, although less definite, take place if the patient is placed on his left side. The changes are also very characteristic in the knee-elbow position, if the dyspnoea will allow it to be assumed. After a few minutes in this position the dulness, up to a small line at the periphery of the lung below, will have nearly all disappeared. Where bronchial breathing was heard crackling sounds are present, but disappear after a few respirations, giving place to normal vesicular breathing. When the pericarditis has existed several days these phenomena are not present. They disappear with the amelioration of the subjective symptoms. They last from three to six or more days, according as the case is acute or not. Dr. Pins ascribes these new physical signs to a backward displacement of the heart, producing a compression of the lower lobe of the left lung, and are chiefly found in young adults of slender build, in whom the chest is flattened antero-posteriorly. This condition is distinguished from pneumonia or pleurisy by the changes in the physical signs when the patient assumes a new position. —*Mitth. d. Wien. Med. Doct.-Coll.*, 1889, xv.

SUBCUTANEOUS INJECTION OF TESTICULAR FLUID.

Professor Brown-Séquard read a communication at the Société de Biologie of Paris, June 1, 1889, which was published in the *Comptes Rendus* of that society on June 21st (No. 24), and later in the *London Lancet*. He believes that the introduction into the economy of a liquid composed of three essential parts, semen, blood from the spermatic veins, and juice extracted from a testicle crushed immediately after removal from the body of a dog, guinea-pig, or other young healthy animal, is susceptible of increasing certain functional activities. He has experimented on himself, making a certain number of subcutaneous injections of a liquid thus prepared. The result was extraordinary. M. Brown-Séquard, who is seventy-two years of age, and who has suffered from an obstinate constipation, has seen this infirmity disappear; prolonged standing brings no fatigue; the evening labors are easily performed; in a word, M. Brown-Séquard has rejuvenated himself thirty years. He suggests that a similar effect may be

produced on females with injections made with a solution prepared from the ovaries of certain animals.—*Journal de Médecine et de Chirurgie*, July, 1889.

SURGERY.

LAVAGE OF THE PERITONEAL CAVITY.

M. Trélat, at the meeting of the French Academy of Medicine, held June 17, 1889, presented the following:—

M. Pierre Delbet, prosector to the Faculty of Medicine, has requested me to present the initial results of important experiments which he has made in the laboratory of the Sorbonne with the assistance of M. Dastre, upon lavage of the peritoneum, which is much in favor at the present time, as a part of the toilet after abdominal operations.

M. Delbet commenced by showing that, in washing the peritoneum with four or five litres (quarts) of a fluid colored with coralline, all the organs of the abdominal cavity, even the liver and stomach, are colored red. The lavage of all is therefore easy and thorough.

Whatever be the means of evacuation, there remains always in the pelvic cavity, the iliac fossæ, and the lumbar fossæ, a certain quantity of liquid, which may be estimated at one hundred and twenty to five hundred grammes (four to sixteen ounces).

The action of peritoneal lavage upon the respiration and the circulation has been studied with great care upon dogs. The animal is fastened upon a table; a pressure-tube introduced into one of the femoral arteries is connected with a registering manometer. A typical trace is taken; then, laparotomy rapidly performed, lavage is begun under one metre of pressure, the manometric trace of the blood-pressure being at the same time recorded. These traces have been taken for long periods,—twenty, thirty, forty-five minutes. They give the blood-pressure, the number and force of the cardiac contractions, and the influence of respiration upon the circulation. The experiments have been varied. To suppress the reflexes and to imitate the natural conditions of the operations, the animals have been placed under the influence of atropine, curare, and chloroform; they have injected the *physiological solution* (aqueous solution of sodium chloride seven parts per thousand) at a mean temperature of 38.5° C. (101.3° F.), at a high temperature, 50° C. (122° F.), and at the low temperature of 18° C. (64.4° F.).

The result of all these experiments is that peritoneal lavage has no perceptible influence upon the respiration or circulation. Heat and cold produce reflex action infinitely less than when applied to the skin.

The peritoneum absorbs the liquid injected into its cavity. This absorption presents a remarkable feature which has been thoroughly